

September 8th: Feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Gospel text (Mt 1:1-16, 18-23): The Book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham. Abraham became the father of Isaac, Isaac the father of Jacob, Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers. Judah became the father of Perez and Zerah, whose mother was Tamar. Perez became the father of Hezron, Hezron the father of Ram, Ram the father of Amminadab. Amminadab became the father of Nahshon, Nahshon the father of Salmon, Salmon the father of Boaz, whose mother was Rahab. Boaz became the father of Obed, whose mother was Ruth. Obed became the father of Jesse, Jesse the father of David the king.

David became the father of Solomon, whose mother had been the wife of Uriah. Solomon became the father of Rehoboam, Rehoboam the father of Abijah, Abijah the father of Asaph. Asaph became the father of Jehoshaphat, Jehoshaphat the father of Joram, Joram the father of Uzziah. Uzziah became the father of Jotham, Jotham the father of Ahaz, Ahaz the father of Hezekiah. Hezekiah became the father of Manasseh, Manasseh the father of Amos, Amos the father of Josiah. Josiah became the father of Jechoniah and his brothers at the time of the Babylonian exile.

After the Babylonian exile, Jechoniah became the father of Shealtiel, Shealtiel the father of Zerubbabel, Zerubbabel the father of Abiud. Abiud became the father of Eliakim, Eliakim the father of Azor, Azor the father of Zadok. Zadok became the father of Achim, Achim the father of Eliud, Eliud the father of Eleazar. Eleazar became the father of Matthan, Matthan the father of Jacob, Jacob the father of Joseph, the husband of Mary. Of her was born Jesus who is called the Christ.

Now this is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about. When his mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found with child through the Holy Spirit. Joseph her husband, since he was a righteous man, yet unwilling to expose her to shame, decided to

divorce her quietly. Such was his intention when, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary your wife into your home. For it is through the Holy Spirit that this child has been conceived in her. She will bear a son and you are to name him Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.” All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: Behold, the virgin shall be with child and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel, which means “God is with us.”

“Behold, the virgin shall be with child and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel”

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Today, the genealogy of Jesus—the Savior who was to come and be born of Mary—reminds us how God’s work is woven into human history, and how He acts quietly, in the hidden silence of each day. At the same time, we see His faithfulness in keeping His promises. Even Ruth and Rahab (cf. Mt 1:5)—foreigners who came to believe in the one true God (and Rahab was a prostitute!)—are counted among the ancestors of the Savior.

The Holy Spirit, who was to bring about in Mary the Incarnation of the Son, had been at work in our history from long ago, preparing the way that would lead to Mary of Nazareth and, through her, to her Son Jesus. “Behold, the virgin shall be with child and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel” (Mt 1:23). How spiritually pure must have been Mary’s very being—her heart and her will—so as to draw the Father’s gaze and be chosen to become the Mother of “God-with-us,” the One who was to bring light and supernatural grace for the salvation of all! Everything in this divine work invites us, in prayer, to contemplate, admire, and adore the greatness, generosity, and simplicity of God’s action—an action that exalts and redeems our human race by personally entering into it.

Furthermore, in today’s Gospel we see how Mary was told that she would bear God, the Savior of His people. And we must remember that this woman, virgin and mother of Jesus, was also to be our mother. This special choice of Mary—“blessed among women” (Lk 1:42)—leaves us in awe of God’s tenderness in the way He works. For He did not redeem us “from afar,” so to speak, but by personally joining our family and our story. Who could have imagined that God would be at once so great and yet so humble, drawing so near to us in such an intimate way?

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

- “A virgin in body, a virgin in mind, a virgin by profession. She is no recent and chance discovery, but the object of God's eternal predilection; foreknown by the Most High, prepared for Himself” (St. Bernard)
- “Human life passes through various phases of transition, which are often difficult and demanding and which require binding choices, renunciation and sacrifice. The Mother of Jesus was placed by the Lord in the decisive moments of salvation history” (Benedict XVI)
- “In the fullness of time the Holy Spirit completes in Mary all the preparations for Christ's coming among the People of God. By the action of the Holy Spirit in her, the Father gives the world Emmanuel ‘God-with-us’ (Mt 1:23).” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, No. 744)